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S P E E C H
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S. TEACKLE WALLIS, ESQ.

As Delivered at the Maryland Institute,

On Friday Evening, February 1st, 1861,

At the Meeting Held Under the following Call:

TOWN MEETING IN FAVOR OF RESTORING THE CONSTITUTIONAL UNION OF THE STATES.—The citizens of Baltimore, who are in favor of restoring the Constitutional Union of the States, and who desire the position of Maryland in the existing crisis to be ascertained by a Convention of the People, are respectfully requested to attend in Mass Meeting, at the Hall of the Maryland Institute, on FRIDAY EVENING, 1st of February, proximo, at 7½ o'clock.

Corrected from the Report for the Daily Exchange.

S. TEACKLE WALLIS, Esq., who was greeted with loud and prolonged applause, said:

My Friends and Fellow-citizens:—I think my friend who has just taken his seat, (Mr. Melane,) has apologized to you, with great injustice to himself, for the desultory manner, as he called it, in which he has discussed the questions presented to you by the resolutions. I confess that in rising to succeed him, I am greatly embarrassed by the eloquent fulness with which he has addressed those questions to your consideration. I feel too, fellow-citizens, that the reasoning involved in the issues before you is almost exhausted by the simple statement of the propositions which the resolutions themselves, announce. The unanimity with which those resolutions have been greeted, demonstrates that both they and their reasoning have gone home already to your hearts and judgments, (applause,) and there is, therefore, little left for any man who speaks to you, but to echo with a feeble voice, the sentiments which you have already spoken with a loud one. (Applause.)

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But, my fellow-citizens, I have a feeling in addressing you this evening, which overcomes all consciousness of embarrassment, and that is the feeling of intense, personal indignation at the position in which I am compelled to stand before you, and in which you are here listening to what any of us may have to say to you. (Applause.) The Governor of the State of Maryland, who would have been at best your servant, if he had been chosen by your suffrages—"That's so," and applause)—but who was not chosen by your suffrages and yet insists on being your master—has given it to be understood, that those who do not agree with him in thinking it the bounden duty of Maryland to be voiceless and motionless in this great crisis of the Republic—you and I and every honorable and patriotic gentleman around me—are but a horde of disorganizers and disunionists—not fit to be heard upon the question of saving your country and mine. (Applause.)

Not merely by his illegal and unconstitutional course has he condemned us to silence and helplessness; not only has he held us up to public and private denunciation as foes to the Union—weakening the confidence of brother in brother, and poisoning with suspicion the relations of friendship and good citizenship among us—but he has permitted the Governor of Pennsylvania, in an official letter, unrebuked, to insult us, citizens of Maryland, by charging that those of us who advocated the call of the Legislature were seeking to "swerve" him—the Governor of Maryland—"from the path of duty." (Applause.) Speaking for myself, and for the friends whose sentiments I know, and in whose action I have shared, I pronounce the imputation false—whether it be official or unofficial—whether it come from the Governor of Pennsylvania, or from the Governor of Maryland, or the clique behind him. I say it is an imputation which the people of this meeting, of this city, and of this State, if they respect themselves, should resist and denounce. (Great applause.)

Not love this Union! In the name of the God who gave it to us, what higher stake has the Governor of Maryland in it than you or I? (Applause.) Who kindled a heart in his bosom, to beat in truer or more fervent and grateful sympathy, than yours or mine, with all the glories which this Union has brought us—with its countless blessings and its magnificent hopes? Is it that the Governor and his counsellors understand these things better than we? Do they mean to tell us that, like the friends of holy Job, "they are the people, and wisdom shall die with them?" (Laughter and applause.)

My fellow-citizens, I was taught, from my childhood, to love and cherish the Union, and there is not a reflection or conviction of my

manhood that has not warmed and strengthened my devotion to it, and heightened my zeal for its perpetuation. When I was called upon, during the last Presidential canvass, to choose between Mr. Breckinridge and Mr. Bell—notwithstanding the preference which I entertained for the former gentleman, because of his peculiar position in regard to the constitutional questions of the day—I was chiefly and especially led to his support by the conviction (as I more than once publicly stated,) that the electoral vote of Maryland, rendered in his behalf, would place her side by side with her Southern sisters, in a position to counsel peace and moderation, and keep unbroken the blessed bonds in which our fathers bound us together. (Applause.)

It was suggested here during that canvass, as we all know, in public speeches, by gentlemen who claim to represent us in Congress, that there was no reasonable apprehension of disunion—that the threats of the South were all bluster, and would amount to nothing when the time came. It was manifest, nevertheless, to those who looked at the past and the future with the calmer and juster eyes of statesmanship, that an issue had for a long time been approaching which might at any moment be precipitated upon the country, and that unless the fanaticism of the North should cease its aggression, and demagogues, not of the North, should cease to play into its hands, the point of resistance must soon be reached, and the question of Union or Disunion be met and settled forever. To suppose that it could be evaded or ignored was simple folly. To hope for the maintenance of the Union, without removing the causes which were daily converting into hatred and alienation the brotherly feeling on which the Union is based—and without which it can never stand, and will not be worth preserving—was equally futile.

As one of the humblest of those to whom the future presented this threatening aspect, I could not resist the conviction, that there was but one hope of relief before us—in case good feeling should be powerless, and the point of conflict should be reached—and that was, for all the States whose institutions and rights were in peril, and who desired to maintain the Union and the Constitution, to unite in one phalanx, and with one voice to say to the aggressors—"Here is the Rubicon—you shall not pass it!" (Applause.) And, my fellow-citizens, as surely as you live and I live, if even the border States alone of this Union, two months ago—with Maryland in their midst, speaking for herself, and her great stake in the Republic—had taken that manly ground, moderately and calmly—without threats and without insult, but with fixed and immovable resolution—the point would have been gained, the

appeal would have been responded to, the wrongs would have been righted, the agitators would have been silenced, the crisis of the Republic would have been over, with all its sorrows and dangers, and the places of industry and labor and happiness, now desolate, would be blossoming like the rose. (Great applause.) Over the waves of fraternal discord, the people of these central commonwealths had only to stretch forth their hands, and the divided waters would have been a wall to them on their right hand and on their left, and they could have walked dry-shod through the midst, with the Union and the Constitution. (Applause.) It was the high destiny of working this great and glorious good that I, for one, would have had Maryland win for herself. It was for this that I would have had her lift herself from the criminal supineness in which she has lain, and which, until of late, the Border States have too far shared with her. But Mr. Hicks has willed it otherwise, and it has come to this, in the order of Providence, that since this crisis has been upon us, there has been no State of Maryland, but Mr. Hicks and the clique around and behind him. (Laughter.)

And even now, at this present, and anxious, and almost despairing moment, when the Union is well nigh in the throes of its dissolution, and Virginia has called together a council of her Sisters, to save it, if they may, in its last hour—even now, the people of Maryland have no voice of their own, wherewith to speak in its behalf. The representatives who stand in her place in that council, speak neither your voice, nor my voice, and have authority to represent nobody but Governor Hicks and themselves. (Great applause.) Nay, I am wrong. They do represent something more than a mere absence of authority. There yet linger in this Hall the echoes of the speech which was made here, not long since, by my able and venerated friend—the Honorable Reverdy Johnson, now one of the Commissioners—the conciliatory burden of which was a legal argument, to show that the people of the seceding States were traitors, and might be punished for their treason. In commingled echoes come back to us, also, the suggestions of the address which my eloquent friend, Mr. Bradford, another of the Commissioners, delivered at the same time, and in which he told the “friends of the Union,” that in considering the solemn issues which divide the nation, they ought to concentrate their efforts upon the open revolutionists of the South, and not waste their strength upon the Northern aggressor as the first wrong-doer! With these ideas of what is demanded for fraternal reconciliation—for the healing of wounds, and the re-establishment of peace among brethren on the basis of right—I regret to believe that the distinguished gentlemen whom I have named do represent pos-

itive opinions, which are utterly hostile to the rooted and solemn convictions of the good people of this Commonwealth. I speak with all the respect and consideration due to their high character and talents, and with all loyalty to personal friendship. If, by their efforts and influence, they can save this Union, or aid in saving it, as it has been to us heretofore and ought to be forever, there will not rise to heaven a prayer of thankfulness more earnest and unqualified than mine. Be the result of their mission, nevertheless, what it may, it is due to ourselves and our rights to declare, that the act which has given them their places is a gross official usurpation. (Applause.)

In commenting thus far upon the action of the Governor of Maryland, I have dealt only with generalities. I desire to do him no injustice, and I am prepared to verify what I have said and mean to say, and what has been said by my distinguished friend, (Mr. McLane,) in regard to the course of Governor Hicks, by reference to his own published letters and addresses. I hold in my hand his various and progressive contributions to constitutional literature and jurisprudence—(laughter)—“which—pardon me—I do not mean to read.” The starting-point in Dorset County, from which he brought the rudiments, is very far removed, I assure you, from the point which he has attained in his communication to the Commissioner from Alabama. Let me invite your attention for a moment to the progress of his ideas.

On the 27th of November, 1860, Governor Hicks addressed a letter to the Honorable Thomas G. Pratt, and other gentlemen, who prayed him to exercise his powers and discharge his duty, by calling an extra session of the Legislature. He declined to comply with their solicitations on the following grounds:

“I cannot but believe that the convening of the Legislature in extra session at this time, would only have the effect of increasing and reviving the excitement now pervading the country, and now apparently on the decline. It would at once be heralded by the sensitive newspapers and alarmists throughout the country as evidence that Maryland had abandoned all hope of the Union, and was preparing to ‘join the traitors to destroy it.’ * * * * *

“You, gentlemen, favor an extra session only because of the importance of the present crisis; but there are others who think of their own interests rather than those of the State, who would be found seeking to monopolize the valuable time of the body in furthering schemes of personal advantage, which can well afford to await the meeting at the ‘regular session.’”

Nevertheless, he said that “the wishes of the people should certainly

"be respected in this matter," and after insisting on the propriety of waiting until we should "hear from the National Executive," from "the other Border Slave States," and from "the congregated wisdom of Congress," he declared, "I shall hold myself ready to act promptly, when I shall believe the honor and safety of Maryland require me to act in the premises." Time wore on. The National Executive had been heard from, and, it seems, without much consolation, for the Governor had waxed nigh to being a "secessionist." On the 6th of December, he addressed a letter to Captain John Contee, of Prince George's, which stepped, as it seems to me, far over the boundaries of what he now supposes to be treason.

"If the Union must be dissolved," he says, "let it be done calmly, deliberately, and *after full reflection on the part of a united South.*"

He then discusses the Personal Liberty Laws, and proceeds to declare, that

"These laws should be repealed at once, and the rights of the South guaranteed by the Constitution, should be respected and enforced. *After allowing a reasonable time for action on the part of the Northern States, if they shall neglect or refuse to observe the plain requirements of the Constitution, then, in my judgment, we shall be fully warranted in demanding a division of the country.*

"We shall have done our duty to the Constitution, to the memory of our fathers, to ourselves and posterity, and the *South can honorably take such steps as patriotism and honor may demand, either in or out of the Union.*"

In conclusion, he adds: "*I shall be the last one to object to a withdrawal of our State from a Confederacy that denies to us the enjoyment of our undoubted rights; but believing that neither her honor nor interests will suffer by a proper and just delay I cannot assist in placing her in a position from which we may hereafter wish to recede. When she moves in the matter, I wish it to be side by side with Virginia—our nearest neighbor—Kentucky and Tennessee.*"

If all this be not rank "secession," as the Governor now understands it, I cannot understand him. I do solemnly pronounce it treason, for which he ought certainly to be hanged—(laughter and applause) according to his doctrines, I beg you to understand me—not according to mine. But whether it be treason or not, I ask you emphatically to note the sentiments declared, from the executive chamber. I ask you to bear witness from the Governor's own unequivocal, and I trust conscientious language, that on the 6th of December he called for the action of "a united South;" that he recognised the right of the South to "demand a division of the country," if its constitutional guarantees

were not protected, and to act "either in or out of the Union:" and that he declared he would be "the last man to object to the withdrawal of our State" from the Union, in such a contingency. All that he asked for was "reasonable" delay—all that he claimed for Maryland, was that she should be "side by side with Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee." Time still went on. Upon the 9th of December, it became the duty of Governor Hicks, to respond to the communication addressed him by a commissioner from Mississippi. Again his plea was only "that time be given, and opportunity afforded for a fair and honorable adjustment." About the course to be adopted, in case that adjustment could not be made, he had neither doubt nor difficulty. "Fraternal concert with the other Border States" was still his alternative. Here is his language:

"Whatever powers I may have I shall use only after full consultation, and in fraternal concert with the other Border States, since we, and they, in the event of any dismemberment of the Union will suffer more than all others combined."

"I am now in correspondence with the Governors of those States, and I await with solicitude for the indications of the course to be pursued by them. When this is made known to me I shall be ready to take such steps as our duty and interest shall demand, and I do not doubt the people of Maryland are ready to go with the people of those States for weal or woe."

And he added—"I fully agree with all that you have said as to the necessity for protection to the rights of the South; and my sympathies are entirely with the gallant people of Mississippi who stand ready to resist any infringement of those rights. But I earnestly hope they will act with prudence as well as with courage."

On the 3d of January, 1861, being pressed by a majority of the Senators of Maryland to call the Legislature together, he published an address to the people, in which he protested and enlarged upon his own patriotism in refusing to convoke it; denounced the motives and principles of "the men embarked in the scheme" of calling it together; charged the existence of a conspiracy to capture the Capitol and the federal archives, which, he intimated, was at the bottom of the movement he was resisting; and endeavored to rally the citizens of the State around himself and his policy, by every appeal to their fears, their sympathies, their credulity and their prejudices. Yet even in this, the most elaborate and passionate of his efforts, he did not venture to desert the plan of consultation and united action with the Slave States of the Border.

"Believing," he declares, "that the interests of Maryland were bound up with those of the Border Slaveholding States, I have been engaged, for months past, in a full interchange of views with the Governors of Virginia, Ken-

"tucky, Tennessee and Missouri, with a view to concerted action upon our part. These consultations, which are still in progress, I feel justified in saying, have resulted in good; so that when the proper time for action arrives, these sister States, bound up in a common destiny, will, I trust, be prepared to act together."

And, he adds, with increasing emphasis:

"I firmly believe that the salvation of the Union depends upon the Border Slave States. Without their aid, the Cotton States could never command the influence and credit and men essential to their existence as a nation. Without them the Northern half of the Republic would be shorn of its power and influence. Within the Union, I firmly believe we can secure guarantees for our protection, which will remove these distressing causes of irritation."

"If we find hereafter that the North shall, after due deliberation, refuse to give them, we will, in a united body, demand and receive a fair division of the national domain."

On January 12th, a committee of most respectable gentlemen, deputed by a conference from all portions of the State, and held in the Law Buildings of this city, had an interview with the Governor. The Conference had deferred to his declared objections to the convocation of the Legislature, and the committee were instructed merely to solicit, that he would issue his proclamation inviting the people to determine, by their ballots, whether they desired a Convention to be called. In case of an affirmative response to the appeal, the Governor was requested to designate a day for the election of members to the contemplated body. The Governor declined. He still desired delay. "He preferred waiting" (according to the announcement in the *Baltimore American*) "until Mr. Crittenden's compromise resolutions should be finally acted upon, before taking any decisive step upon the subject at issue." On the 24th of January, to the astonishment of every body, except those initiated in the mystery, there appeared in the *Annapolis Republican*, a copy of a letter bearing date as far back as the 8th of that month, and addressed to the Hon. J. L. Corry, Commissioner of Alabama, wherein every previous suggestion of the Governor, and of everybody else, looking to "a united South," a "concert of the Border States," "a united body," a position "side by side with Virginia, Tennessee and Kentucky," an association "for weal or woe," with those States, or any other States, "in a common destiny," is utterly repudiated and denounced, as a flagrant violation of the Constitution—a step to which "the people of Maryland will never consent!" Such "fraternal concert" for any purpose or in any shape, is not (he says) for an instant to be tolerated. Let us hear

the language in which this doctrine is proclaimed, from the same lips by which the people of Maryland were so often assured, as I have shown you, that the identical course, now so bitterly denounced, was nearest the Governor's heart. He speaks thus,

"I cannot see how, while the Constitutional prohibition stands against "compacts or agreements between any of the States, any "mutual league" "can be had, even between those whose hopes and hazards are alike. "And if this prohibition has been judicially declared to include 'every "agreement, written or verbal, formal or informal, positive or implied, "by the mutual understanding of the parties,' then I am unable to "imagine how any league or covenant or understanding whatever, unauthorized or unapproved by Congress, even though it should be in "furtherance of the laws and for strengthening the Confederacy, can "be otherwise than in plain violation of the clearest provisions of the "supreme law of the land."

Instead, therefore, of hearkening to any such treason—instead of proceeding with the Border States "in a united body, to demand and receive a division of the national domain;" instead of "demanding a division of the country;" instead of having our Governor to lead us, "in fraternal concert with the other Border States," in the ultimate vindication of our common rights and "common destiny"—instead of "concerted action, upon our part," with the people with whom we are "ready to go"—we are to do what? Abide by the action of Congress!

"The Congress of the United States," says the Governor, "offers the only mode, authorized by the Constitution, for consultation and advice among the several States. To the Congress I still look with confidence for such enactments as shall secure our just and equal rights, and shall satisfy all except those who are determined to be satisfied with nothing but revolution, and the hopes that are to arise to them from anarchy and confusion."

Fellow-citizens! does not this suffice? Is it not as plain as fact and argument can make it, that the people of Maryland have been deluded and deceived? Is it not manifest that they have been entertained and kept quiet by assurances of a desire and a purpose to unite them, in the vindication of their position, with the Border States, should the disruption of the Union be inevitable, and that all those assurances were hollow, and are now to be repudiated and abjured? Is it not demonstrated that the States, which it was declared would be "prepared to act together," are not to be allowed "to act together," if Mr. Hicks can prevent it? The result of the whole is perfectly palpable. It is intended that Maryland shall be kept inert and silent under one pretext or another, until the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln, and then her people are to be rallied to his support, as the representative of the govern-

ment and the Union, and their love and devotion to the Union are to be their lure and decoy into the practical support of the Republican party. (Cries of "Never, never.") I welcome the declaration, not only as your sentiment, but as the feeling of the whole people of the State. The scheme nevertheless is as plain as the sunshine—as transparent as the moonlight. Happily it is a bargain which it takes two to make, and which you can thwart. (Applause.)

In attempting to expose it, I have had no desire to throw one single spark of excitement into a controversy which the conduct of the Governor and his partisans has rendered exciting enough. But as a citizen and a gentleman—involved with whole masses of the good people of this State, in an imputation of treason and perfidy to that sacred constitutional Union, which I cherish more than all things else, in my relations, as a patriot, to my country—made too, in common with those whose opinions are like my own, the subject of insolent reproach to the Executive of my State, by the sympathizing Executive of another, I have felt it due to all of us that the course of Mr. Hicks should be made so plain, as that he who runs may read it. (Applause.) And I do solemnly declare, that I have never entertained an opinion, nor do I understand the resolutions before you as asserting a doctrine, in regard to the course to be pursued by Maryland in the contingency of a dismemberment of the Union, which goes one step beyond the doctrines of Governor Hicks upon the same subject, so repeatedly and ardently proclaimed by him, and now, at the last, repudiated.

A word upon another branch of the same subject. The Constitution authorizes, and in my judgment directs, the Governor to assemble the Legislature upon extraordinary occasions. Even upon his own theory he is bound to exercise that power now; for whatever his previous opinions may have been, the very fact that he has sent commissioners to Washington, for the purposes set forth in the invitation of Virginia, is a concession that one of the most extraordinary occasions which could shake an empire has startled and affrighted this Republic. Nevertheless, he will not assemble the Legislature. The stars have said it. He has assumed, and his friends and advocates have assumed with him, that its convocation is not desired for any other purpose than to fling this State forth, madly from its sphere. He and they contemplate, or profess to contemplate, nothing but secession, and secession in the wildest shape, and for the most corrupt and infamous purposes, as the result of the meeting of the General Assembly. Fellow-citizens—No man has a better right to know, and no one has a more incumbent obligation on him to do justice to the present Legislature of Maryland, than I have. I was before them, last winter, long and often, with friends who are around me, in the successful effort to restore, by proper legislation, the rights and order of this community. (Applause.) It is to their patriotic and conservative action, altogether, that you are indebted for the freedom with which you assemble here to-night to speak your sentiments, and for the security which will attend you to your homes when you separate. It is only because of that conservative action of theirs, on your behalf and mine, that red-handed murder no longer writes election returns

among us, for Congressmen who misrepresent us, and Governors who usurp our prerogatives. (Tremendous applause.) And I tell you, fellow-citizens, that the self-same reasons which make the Governor of Maryland distrust that Legislature, ought to be your reasons and mine for trusting it. It is natural that you and he should view with different eyes, the principles and conduct of those representatives of the people, by whose interposition we were enabled to break down the brutal despotism which made him Governor of Maryland. (Applause.) I repeat, therefore, that I have reason for confidence in that Legislature, and that the proper mode of giving utterance to the sentiments of our people, is through a convention which that Legislature shall call. If the Governor persists in refusing to give the people that legitimate and constitutional opportunity of being heard, the responsibility is on his head, and they must do the next best thing they can, by calling a convention themselves. (Great applause.)

In the presence of what crisis and what necessity do we stand, fellow-citizens? Let us look at it like men. Six States of this Confederacy have gone out from it. God knows that their departure from this Union has given me only anguish. The ringing of bells and the booming of cannon, seem to me no proper part of the demonstrations which belong to an event so sad. I feel as if every true-hearted man should bow to such a dispensation—inevitable as it might be—in the spirit with which he would follow his mother to the grave. (Sensation and applause.) But whatever be the feeling with which we regard the fact, it is a fact nevertheless. Six States have gone from among us. Call it revolution, or secession or rebellion—call it anything you please—still they have gone out of the Union, and it depends upon the result of the conference, which is about to take place in Washington, whether the remaining Slave States South and West of Maryland—the whole broad belt and border from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, and beyond—shall not go out likewise. And while this great problem of our destiny is being solved, and howsoever it may be solved, we are told that our interest and our duty—our obligations to the Republic and ourselves—require us to be silent and quiet—to surrender ourselves to Gov. Hicks, and “cling to the Union!” Cling to the Union? Cling to what? What is the Union into which Maryland entered, and to which she belongs? A great Republic, one and undivided, almost covering a continent. Where is she in that Union? A central State—the tendrils of her prosperity fastening, upon every side, to the confederated communities around her. You break that confederacy in the midst, leaving her a border province, with a foreign nation, and perhaps an enemy, beside her, and you tell her to cling to the Union still—to cling to what then exists no longer, in love or association, or peace!

Oh! but say our constitutional lawyers at Annapolis and elsewhere—the Union will not be dissolved—the States will have only seceded, and secession is unconstitutional—everything, therefore, will be as it was before, and Maryland must cling to it! Are we talking with men, or are they talking to us as children? Are we to

look at abstractions and statute-books, or are we dealing with the great and palpable, and if you please, the terrible facts of a revolution? I have heard no argument to prove to Maryland that the States which have left and may leave the Union, in fact, must still be regarded as part of it, which would not prove with equal demonstration that the United States of America are still the colonies of Great Britain. I have heard no logic that establishes the constitutional right of half the Union to call itself the Union, because it preserves the forms of the government, that would not equally prove Massachusetts to be the United States, if every other State were to leave her, provided she chose to retain the national name, and had army and navy and strength enough to enforce her pretensions by arms.

The Cotton States, then, are out of the Union. The responsibility, it is true, is on their heads—but still they have left it. The Border States to the South and West of us, unless it pleases heaven to permit a compromise, will go out also. What is the State of Maryland to do? To tell her to cling to the Union then, is to bid her cling to the North, and clinging to the North, means clinging to the Republican party. (Applause.) And this—when she knows that if the line be drawn on the Slave border, the right is on the one side and the wrong is on the other, and the Republican party is the champion of the wrong. In the olden times, when the people of Maryland acted on such questions, and had found the right, they did not doubt whither their course lay—nor did it take them three months, with a volume of correspondence, to distinguish the right from the wrong. (Applause.)

But there is a theory, as you are aware, my fellow-citizens, upon which the fact of any possible disruption of the Union is seriously challenged in argument—I mean the theory that the Federal Government may of right coerce into allegiance the States which have abandoned it. I desire to speak upon this branch of the subject, without expressing the indignation with which I think it deserves to be treated. Speaking as a lawyer, upon a subject within the range of my professional studies and reflections, and having anxiously sought to get at the truth in regard to it, without prejudice or passion, I assert the deliberate opinion—as strongly and as conscientiously entertained as any I have ever formed—that the idea of coercing a State or its people, when that State, in its corporate capacity, has declared itself out of the Union, has no color or support whatever from the Federal Constitution. Everything I have read convinces me, with equal positiveness, that any attempt to force such a principle into the Constitution, would have been utterly fatal to the possibility of its adoption. (Applause.) I challenge any man to read the records of the Convention which framed the Constitution, or search the proceedings of the State Conventions which ratified it, and deny the fact, that whenever the suggestion of coercing a State was made, or of repressing by force any revolutionary State action, the men of mark and controlling influence in those bodies denounced it as impracticable and absurd, involving of necessity the bloody and hopeless disruption of the Union they were forming. I state the proposition as one standing by itself—unconnected

with the question of the constitutionality or unconstitutionality of secession, and true in either aspect of that question. And is it not right? Does it not carry along with it every interest of civilization and humanity—every principle and theory on which our governments, both State and national, were founded?

I confess I cannot realize what gentlemen mean when they talk with sober seriousness about hanging and shooting men back into brotherhood and union with us. I do not understand their idea of perpetuating the Republic, by drenching its broken fragments with fraternal gore. Above all, I cannot comprehend the philosophy of those who, believing that secession is unconstitutional, still believe that the people of the South have been goaded to it by unconstitutional wrong, and would execute them for treason nevertheless, because they are not quite patient enough in enduring it. The Union is a great blessing and a glorious privilege, but there is no law of God or man which will uphold the doctrine of cementing it with blood, under color of maintaining a government, which rests upon two leading principles; the one, that all government is founded on the will of the governed; the other, that the doctrine of non-resistance to arbitrary power is slavish and absurd. (Applause.)

I, for one, have those who are bound to me by the closest ties of kindred and affection, in two States, whose Conventions have solemnly repealed the ordinances which bound them to the Union. There are a thousand men before me, each of whom has some close bond of friendship or of family, where the old political ties have been sundered. To say to you and to me, that it is our duty, under the Constitution we have sworn to uphold, to go among them with fire and sword, and to ravage and despoil their heritage, in order that they may love us and cleave to us hereafter, is to announce a doctrine, in support of which no government can ever raise the arm of one free man in Maryland. (Applause.)

This is not sentiment merely. It is reason, and truth, and manhood—and any theory that the Union is to be preserved by compulsion will fall to the ground, and sink in it, of its own weight. What, then, is Maryland to do if compromise should fail, and the line of actual separation be drawn along her border? It becomes her to be ready for that issue. She has a right to speak, and it is her duty and her interest to speak. Let her do it. (Applause.) Down to this time, no man is able to say with authority what her will is. The people of the North have believed her silence to be Northern sympathy, and they have resisted compromise. The people of the South have been discouraged by it, and they have precipitated action. She has not only held her own hand from the good work of mediation, but she has strengthened the hands besides, that were already too strong for the Constitution. Think heaven, the sin of her withdrawal from the field where her labors were due, is not on your heads or mine. If ever history should write the record of the disruption of this government, the blackest of its pages will be that on which are written the names of those—whether States or men—who ought to have stood up between the living and the dead, yet did it not. Let the evil of such reproach hang over us no longer. (Applause.) Let us assemble our Convention and declare our resolves, and no longer let our destinies be shaped for us by the will and usurpation of a single man. It may be that Governor Hicks is wiser than all the

rest of the Union put together. It may be that he has sources of information, "not accessible" to anybody else. It may be that the Convention, when assembled, may represent his sentiments, not yours or mine. If it should do so—very well—I will obey. If it should not, I desire him to obey. But it is time we had insisted upon having the point finally determined. It is not only due to our independence, our interests and our patriotism, but our self-respect and self-vindication demand it. Wars and rumors of wars, conspiracies and tumults, riots and routs, have been flitting in terrible array through the Governor's imagination, convincing him that we were not fit to be trusted with our own government and our own affairs, and that it was his paramount and sacred duty to keep us quiet and attend to our business himself. I suppose he has believed in all these visions and dreams, (laughter)—at all events he has acted upon them,—and it is high time we had made up our minds to say whether they are true or false, and whether the Governor is the only man among us, in public or private station, who is honest and wise enough to be trusted with our stake in the Union or our destiny in the event of its disruption. If he is right, let the Convention say so. If we are to go to the North, let the majority so rule—if we are to be spared that journey, let us know it!

As to the questions which may come before the Convention, when it meets to deal with the great contingencies of the future, and the terms of our possible relation to a Southern Confederacy, I am only now prepared to say, that they involve much complication and embarrassment, demanding all the resources of wise and patient statesmanship. There may be difficulties in my way, which will not be in yours, and difficulties in yours, which may appear none to me. The ballot-box will settle these differences, fairly and peacefully, and only the ballot-box can so deal with them. It is as far as possible from my purpose to say anything tending to excite, but I am as certain as I am of my existence, that if the Governor of Maryland were able to carry out his plan of preventing the people from thus determining these matters for themselves, it would create domestic strife among us, as surely and as sadly as coercion elsewhere would breed civil war. By temperament, and from conviction, I am a man of peace, and I turn therefore to the pacific arbitration of the ballot-box, as our refuge from the horrors of such an alternative.

Fellow-citizens, I have finished what it has seemed to me proper to say to you. I repeat to you, so that no man may misunderstand me, that I desire, above all things, this glorious Union and Constitution to be preserved, for they are the best heritage bequeathed to us by our fathers, from whose dust every blessing of our political existence has sprung up to us. If that Union cannot be preserved by fair concession and honest and becoming compromise, I desire the State in which I was born to take her stand with the right. That it is right is reason enough, but I believe, besides, that with nations as with men, wherever right is, there every true interest is sure to be likewise. (Applause.) Whatever the decision of Maryland shall be, in that decision I shall acquiesce, for my home and my destiny are here. But one thing I am sure of, and that is, that any reconciliation that may be patched up, will be a wretched and melancholy failure, ominous of future and bloody discord, unless the question of slavery be

taken from the Congress of the United States, and the disension of the institution and the principles which surround it, be removed forever from all political temptations. The people of the South will not—the people of Maryland never will—submit to have religion and morality manufactured for them by Massachusetts. (Laughter and applause.) We will never consent to accept Plymouth Rock as the touchstone of right and truth. (Applause.)

One word more and I have done. What I have said to you, I have said altogether as a private citizen, speaking his individual sentiments only, and desiring to represent no one but himself. I believe that on occasions of public difficulty like the present, it is the duty of every man to form his own conclusions patiently and deliberately; to express them frankly, and take the consequences. (Applause.) That done, his duty ends, and it is for the majority to settle the rest. I belong to no party. I say this, because I desire to be understood as speaking in the interests of no party, and to please none. I am no politician, and do not covet being regarded as one, for no man can be more wholly devoid than I am of political aspirations or ambition. If you believe me to be a man of truth, I ask you to believe that I mean precisely what I say. For the opinions I have expressed to-night, I claim no indulgence, unless it be such to have them dealt with as honest, whether you or the community concur with them or do not.

[Mr. Wallis took his seat amid immense applause and cries of “go on,” “go on.”]



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